



AMBUPANA VIDHI (DRINKING WATER) FOR HEALTHY LIFE PRESCRIBED IN AYURVEDA – A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Water is life and getting enough water in right way every day is important for health. When it is judiciously consumed in appropriate quantity, it acts like nectar and if not then the same acts as poison. The quantity of water intake differs for different person. So the right way of drinking water is to be understood in relation to meal, according to thirst and hunger and according to place. Water has verity Hrudya, Jivan, Tarpan, Budhiprabhodana, Tanu, Shita, Laghu. If a person consume water in inappropriate way, then the balance of Mahabhutas in our body is disturbed which cause the diseases. Ayurveda has also explored the conditions for no intake of water, less intake of water, proper intake of water and many more as except in proper way all causes vitiations of Doshas leading to manifestation of different ailments. Thinking about the nature of water, the conditions vary for the use of Hot and Cold water. Although drinking hot water is best in all time, the use of cold water is required in conditions where there is dominance of Pitta Doshas. So, the water is the sustainer of life of all living beings; the entire world is full of it and hence it should be consumed as per the requirements of the individuals.

KEY WORDS: Ambu, Nidanapariwarjana, Ushapana, Thirst.

INTRODUCTION:

Water is essential for life. From the time that primeval species ventured from the oceans to live on land, a major key to survival has been prevention of dehydration. The critical adaptations cross an array of species, including man. Without water, humans can survive only for days. Water comprises from 75% body weight in infants to 55% in elderly and is essential for cellular homeostasis and life.

Getting enough water every day is important for health. Drinking water can prevent dehydration, a condition that can cause unclear thinking, result in mood change, cause body to overheat, and lead to constipation and kidney stones.²

The thirst and fluid ingestion responses of older persons to a number of stimuli have been compared to those seen in younger persons.³ Following water deprivation older persons are less thirsty and drink less fluid compared to younger persons.^{4,5} The decrease in fluid consumption is predominantly due to a decrease in thirst as the relationship between thirst and fluid intake is the same in young and old persons. Older persons drink insufficient water following fluid deprivation to replenish their body water deficit. When dehydrated older persons are offered a highly palatable selection of drinks, this also failed to result in an increased fluid intake.⁶ The effects of increased thirst in response to an osmotic load have yielded variable responses with one group reporting reduced osmotic thirst in older individuals and one failing to find a difference. In a third study, young individuals ingested⁷ almost twice as much fluid as old persons, despite the older subjects having a much higher serum osmolality.⁸

Overall these study suggest that water drinking is based on the regulation of thirst. Water is the sustainer of life of all living beings; the entire world is full of it. When it is used judiciously in appropriate quantity, it acts like nectar or acts as poison when used otherwise.⁹

Ambupana Vidhi in Ayurveda:

Acharya Sushruta gives best way of preventive treatment i.e. 'Nidan parivarjan'. Ayurveda gives more importance to the etiological factors as the avoidance of causative factors can prevent manifestation of any disease. Aiming the Ayurveda principle of Nidanparivarjan in case of any diseases avoidance of etiological factors that has been mentioned in Ayurveda texts one can prevent and manage diseases easily. Nidan parivarjan look better way to prevent disease in people who have never had disease or to prevent a disease from returning.

Water is life of living Kingdome. It possess ability to treat various diseases and this watery therapy established as important non invasive therapy in medical field. It is source of Health if taken in right time and appropriate quantity.¹⁰ Water has verity Hrudya, Jivan, Tarpan, Budhiprabhodana, Tanu, Shita, Laghu.¹¹ The quantity of water in Samyak Yoga is always good for health. In Charak Samhita the Ayoga, Mithyagoga, and Atiyoga of Kal, Endriya, Budhi6

are mentioned. It causes Physical and Mental disease. If a person consume water in inappropriate way, then the balance of Mahabhutas in our body is disturbed which cause the diseases. The quantity of water intake differs for different person. So the right way of drinking water can be understood as;

In relation with meal:

Acharya Sushruta has quoted that the diner should drink water in suitable (small) quantity. It has been stated that drinks if consumed at the beginning of the meal produces emaciation of the body; if consumed in the middle it maintains the body (in its usual size) and if consumed after the meals (at the end of the meal) it produces stoutness; hence it should be used considering the desirability (of either leanness or stoutness).^{12,13}

Also, Acharya Bhavmishra has explicated that after drinking too much of water food does not get digested well and again if it is not taken in proper quantity, the defect arises same. So in order to augment the digestive fire, one should drink water frequently in moderate quantity.¹⁴

According to Thirst and Hunger:

Prescribed rule is that during the thirst, one should not eat food and during hunger one should not drink water. It leads to *Vataprakopa* causing the thirsty person for being a patient of *Gulma* and the hungry person being a patient of *Jalodara*.^{15,16}

Over-drinking of water:

During thirst if large amount of water is taken, it leads *Kapha* and *Pitta Prakopa*. It is especially, in person suffering from fever, *Ama* (undigested materials) condition, sleep, stupor, flatulence, feeling of heaviness of the body, cough, poor digestive capacity, nausea, salivation, difficulty in breathing and nasal catarrh.¹⁷

According to place:

Yet another guideline is important that once a certain kind of water has been used for drinking then no other type of drinking is to be used till the first one is digested well. For example if uncooked water is consumed and is in the process of digestion, then cooked water should not be consumed and vice versa: This is to be applied in cold and hot water too.

Limitations after Drinking water:

After drinking water, one should not indulge in long walk, speaking, study, singing or sleeping because these vitiate *Doshas* having *Sthansanshrya* at stomach, throat and chest and causes nasal catarrh, weakness of digestive power, vomiting and many other diseases.

Intake of water is contraindicated in:

Water is not to be allowed in some of the conditions like one suffering from *Hiccup*, *Shwasa* (dyspnoea), *Kasa* (cough), *Urdhvajatruga Roga* (diseases of parts above the shoulders) due to vitiation of *Vata*, *Urakshata* (tear in the chest/lungs), *Praseka* (excess of salivation) and *Upahata swara* (loss of voice). Those who are

indulged in singing, speech and study with loud sound should avoid drinking water.¹⁸

Less quantity of water is indicated in:

In diseases such as *Arochaka* (loss of taste), *Pratishyaya* (common cold), *Praseka* (increased salivation), *Kshvayathu* (edema), *Kshaya* (consumption), *Mandagni* (decreased digestive power), *Udara* (enlargement of the abdomen), *Kushtha* (skin diseases), *Jwara* (fever), *Netramaya* (eye diseases), *Vrana* (ulcers), and *Madhumeha* (diabetes mellitus), less amount of water is to be consumed.^{19,20}

Cold water is contraindicated in:

Cold water use is fashion now a days. Cold water should not be used in diseases like pain of the flanks, nasal catarrh, diseases of *Vata* origin, pain in the throat, flatulence, loss of movement in the abdomen; by persons who have undergone *Shodhana* (purificatory therapies), who have *Nava Jwara*, hiccup and also one who have just consumed *Sneha* (fats) prior to purificatory therapies.²¹

Cold water is indicated in:

In some of the conditions cold water is indicated which there is dominance of *Pitta* like *Madatyaya* (alcoholic intoxication), *Ghani* (exhaustion), *Murccha* (fainting), *Chardi* (vomiting), *Shrama* (debility), *Bhrama* (giddiness), *Trishna* (thirst), *Daha* (burning sensation), aggravation of *Pitta*, *Rakta* and poison.²²

Boiled water after cooling is indicated in:

If boiled water after cooling is consumed, then it does not increase moisture in the body. It is easy to digest and ideal for *Doshas* associated with *Pitta*. It is suited for persons suffering from burning sensation, diarrhoea, diseases of *Pitta* and *Rakta* origin, fainting, alcoholism, poison, thirst, vomiting and giddiness and diseases of *Sannipata* (aggravation of all the three *Doshas* simultaneously) conditions.^{23,24}

Luke warm water is indicated in:

Luke warm water alleviates *Kapha*, *Meda* (fat) and *Vata*, stimulates hunger, helps digestion, good for throat, easily digestible, cleans the urinary bladder, cures *Shwasa* (dyspnoea), *Kasa* (cough) and *Jwara* (fever), hiccup, *Adhmana* (flatulence), *Pinasa* (running nose), *Ama* (accumulation of undigested food), *Parshvaruja* (pain in flanks). It is ideal during *Shodhana*. It is suitable in all health conditions.^{25, 26}

Demerits of Paryushita Jala (Stale Water):

Acharya Sushruta states that *Paryushita jala* (stale water which has been kept for more than one day) is not to be given to a thirsty person because it becomes sour and increases *Kapha*. *Acharya Vagbhata* believes that it increases *Tridosha*.^{27,28}

Ushahpana (Drinking water in the morning)

The reference of *Ushahpana* is found in *Bhavaprakasha Samhita* where it is quoted that one who drinks eight *Prasriti* (approx. 768 ml.) of water at the time of early sunrise, shall live for a hundred years and also will be free from diseases and premature ageing. While *Acharya Bhoja* has stated that water kept overnight is to be taken in the last *Prahara* of night.²⁹

Merits of Drinking water in the morning:

Diseases because of *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Rakta*, all be subsided with the consumption of water at the last *Prahara* of Night. It is also helpful in the disease conditions like *Arsha* (Haemorrhoids), *Shotha* (edema), *Grahani Dosh* (duodenal disease), *Jwara* (fever), *Jathara* (enlargement of the abdomen), *Jara* (old age), *Kushtha* (leprosy), *Medovikara* (disorders of fat tissue), *Mutraghata* (suppression of urine), *Astrapitta* (bleeding disease), pain of the ears, throat, head and pelvis, eye diseases, etc.³⁰

Water drinking habits as a cause of disease:

The guidelines prescribed in Ayurveda classics are the way to have life free from ailments. If these guidelines are not followed accordingly leads to cause for different disease conditions. They are:

- 1) Excessive intake of liquid leads to *Prameha*.³¹
- 2) Excessive intake of sweet and sour liquid leads to *Krimi*.³²
- 3) Intake of fresh water in excess especially after heavy food, intake of cold water when hungry, indulgence in drinks which are devoid of fat e.g. *Chacchika* (a type of butter milk), alcohol leads to *Vataja Gulma*.³³
- 4) Intake of cold water immediately after exposure to the burning sun, exertion or exposure to frightening situation leads to *Kushtha*.³⁴
- 5) Excessive intake of cold water leads to *Hikka-Shwasa*,³⁵ *Shiroroga*
- 6) Excessive intake of water and also intake of cold water especially after meal, leads to *Pratishyaya*.
- 7) Excessive intake of water especially in the night leads to *Kaphaprapakopa*.

- 8) Intake of large quantity of water in the absence of appetite leads to *Kaphaja Gulma*.³⁶
- 9) Excessive intake of water after *Snehapana* or in *Mandagni* (suppressed power of digestion) or by an individual who is cachectic or excessively emaciated leads to *Jalodara*.³⁷
- 10) Intake of drinks while having the urge for Micturation leads to *Mutravaha Sroto Dushti*.³⁸
- 11) Excess intake of water leads to *Dhvajopaghataja Klaihya*, *Atisara*,³⁹ *Ajirna*,⁴⁰ *Shiroroga*.⁴¹
- 12) *Pittaja trishna* occurs in a person on drinking a large amount of cold water after exposure to heat due to obstruction to the *Ushma* and its transfer to *Koshta*.⁴²

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